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FM AMEMBASSY LONDON
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 1248
INFO RUEHAK/AMEMBASSY ANKARA PRIORITY 0648
RUEHAB/AMEMBASSY ASHGABAT PRIORITY 0108
RUEHGB/AMEMBASSY BAGHDAD PRIORITY 0346
RUEHKB/AMEMBASSY BAKU PRIORITY 0126
RUEHRL/AMEMBASSY BERLIN PRIORITY 2373
RUEHBUL/AMEMBASSY KABUL PRIORITY 0407
RUEHFR/AMEMBASSY PARIS PRIORITY 2766
RUEHDE/AMCONSUL DUBAI PRIORITY 0113
RUEHIT/AMCONSUL ISTANBUL PRIORITY 0113
RUEHGV/USMISSION GENEVA PRIORITY 1106
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK PRIORITY 0866

C O N F I D E N T I A L LONDON 000140

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 01/12/2017

TAGS: PREF PHUM IR TU UK

SUBJECT: IRANIAN HUMAN RIGHTS ADVOCATES CLAIM OFFICIAL
ABUSE OF IRANIAN REFUGEES IN TURKEY

REF: A. 06 LONDON 7749 (NOTAL)

1B. LONDON-NEA-ANKARA EMAILS JAN 5 AND PREVIOUS

1C. LONDON-NEA E-MAIL JAN 10

Classified By: Political Minister-Counselor Maura Connally for reasons
1.4(b) and (d)

11. (C) Poloff has received, via London contacts, e-mails from several Iranian human rights activists who allege (citing evidence of film which Poloff has not seen) a pattern of beatings, extortion, and sexual assault by officials in Van, Turkey, against Kurdish Iranian refugees seeking protected status from the UN and from Turkey. Those making the charges do not indicate any prior attempt to contact or inform the USG. Embassy London is unable independently to assess the merits of these allegations. In light of the allegations' seriousness, as well as the past veracity of the contacts who relayed them, Embassy has forwarded all information received to Department for consideration and possible action (ref c). End Summary.

12. (C) Since January 5, Poloff has received, via two established UK contacts, verbal information and e-mails (forwarded to NEA/IR January 10) on the treatment of refugees at the Van camps from Pezhman (aka Pejman) Piran, an Iranian human rights activist cited in the Department's 2006 Human Rights Report (ref a) and from Ms. Monireh Mohammadi, an Iranian expatriate from Canada, reportedly a documentary filmmaker and an accredited independent journalist for an Iranian community newspaper in Toronto (ref b).

13. (C) Canadian journalist Mohammadi claims in these e-mails to have filmed interviews in Van with many Iranian Kurds who allege they are victims, at the hands of Turkish police and intelligence officials, of widespread extortion, beatings, and sexual abuse, as well as of other abuses of authority. Mohammadi and Pezhman's e-mails outline 20 of these interviews, and provide contact information in both Canada and Van.

14. (C) Pezhman, Mohammadi and their colleagues also complain of allegedly flawed UNHCR rulings; the UNHCR reportedly found the refugees Mohammadi interviewed not to be at risk of political persecution if deported to Iran, despite allegedly significant previous persecution by Iranian authorities. As examples, Mohamadi's emails include two case histories of Iranian Kurds disapproved by the UNHCR in Van who allegedly had been brutalized and persecuted repeatedly by Iranian

authorities, in various eras, for their political beliefs and activities before arriving in Turkey.

¶5. (C) Comment: Although Embassy London is unable independently to assess the merits of either set of complaints, Embassy sources who forwarded this information, although not disinterested parties, have in the past been scrupulously factual. Embassy notes the possibility that the alleged film interviews may be publicly aired at some point, but has no information on whether or when this may occur.

Visit London's Classified Website:
<http://www.state.sgov.gov/p/eur/london/index.cfm>
Johnson